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## RECENT THEOLOGICAL LITERATURE

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### THE JEWISH ENCYCLOPEDIA

The publication of this great work<sup>1</sup> is an event noticeable for more reasons than one. First of all, it bears impressive testimony to the growing importance of the Jewish community in the United States, and to the interest of American Jews in their own religion and history. In the second place, the work is an invaluable repository of information for things Jewish. Whoever seeks information concerning Jewish customs, institutions, and the experiences through which the race has passed, will find it here. Jewish scholars, statesmen, artists, literary men, and those not of Jewish birth who have been concerned in the history of this people, are here commemorated. For these reasons the work must long remain a source of information of the first rank.

It is not, however, the purpose of the present paper to examine or criticize the work in these respects. We are concerned especially with its significance in the theological world. The question that interests us is: How far are Jewish thinkers affected by the theological thought of today? This question easily resolves itself into two others. The theological thought of today is characterized by the critical method, and by a more adequate historical apprehension than has prevailed in earlier periods. The result has been a larger toleration within the boundaries of the individual denominations, and a greater variety of thought, some would say confusion of thought, in each of them. It will be of interest to examine the work before us with reference to these tendencies, and then to ask specifically for its attitude toward Christianity.

For critical views and method it is significant, first of all, that the editors do not propose to enter into competition with Hastings' *Bible Dictionary* or the *Encyclopedia Biblica*. To this extent they indorse these works, both of which treat biblical topics from the critical point of view. Moreover, they say in so many words:

Among Jews as among Christians there exists a wide diversity of opinion as to the character of the revelation of the Old Testament. There are those who

<sup>1</sup> *The Jewish Encyclopedia: A Descriptive Record of the History, Religion, Literature and Customs of the Jewish People from the Earliest Times to the Present Day.* New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1905. Twelve volumes. \$6 each.

hold to the literal inspiration, while others reject this view and are of opinion that the circumstances under which the various texts were produced can be ascertained by what is known as the Higher Criticism.

The cautious wording of the statement is perhaps intended to indicate that the editors themselves are not to be held responsible for the critical views which they introduce to their readers. But the assumption of the passage is certainly that the critical views are of such importance that they cannot rightly be withheld from readers of the *Encyclopedia*. That critical methods are therefore fully recognized as legitimate must be evident.

The critical method, then, is recognized on the part of Jewish scholars, as is evident from the way in which biblical subjects are actually handled in the body of the work. In the more important articles the biblical data are first given by themselves; then follows a section recounting the rabbinical material, to which in some cases the traditions of Islam are added; finally comes the critical view. This last is usually the work of a Christian scholar. In some instances it is thought sufficient to give the biblical data without comment, and where the critical view is presented we sometimes find an apologetic remark added designed to conciliate the adherents of tradition. Thus, after the analysis of the Book of Genesis is given (taken from Holzinger), we learn that there are in the book "no anachronisms, no repetitions, and no unnecessary doublets," and that it is "not compiled from various sources." Similarly the article "Pentateuch" gives the critical analysis on the basis of Carpenter and Battersby, and then tells us that this analysis is based on two assumptions, both of which are against the evidence from the analogy of other religions. Under the title "Deuteronomy" we have, besides the biblical data, *two* critical theories presented, one by a Christian, the other by a Jewish scholar. On the other hand, the article "Isaiah" is by the competent hand of Cheyne, and of course is critical throughout.

It can hardly be denied that the effect of thus combining two divergent points of view must sometimes be puzzling to the reader. And the occasional apologetic defense of tradition may even go against his moral sense. Jacob's substitution for Esau, for example, is affirmed to be according to the divine purpose—a kind of defense to which we are accustomed enough in Christian circles. It is, in fact, probable that in this respect even conservative Jewish scholarship is freer to take a really historical view than is a certain type of Christian scholarship. To the Jew the books of the prophets always have been inferior in importance and in inspiration to the Pentateuch. It is with respect to the latter—the divine law—that the editors show most sensitiveness. Yet even here, as we have seen, the

critical view is fairly presented, works of Christian scholars are freely cited, and Christian collaborators are engaged to give their views. The occasional *caveat* which is entered scarcely breaks the force of the real historic presentation.

Our second point of interest is the breadth and variety of the views held within the bounds of Judaism. Here we have abundant light, not only from the phenomena just considered, but from others even more striking. The Christian inquirer who approaches his book with the desire to know what Judaism is will receive a double answer. The discussion of the "Dietary Laws," for example, will tell him first from the conservative point of view that "the laws are divinely inspired and the rejection of them is tantamount to a rejection of a belief in Israel's deliverance from Egypt," and further that any discussion "regarding the historical development of these laws is obviously excluded from the standpoint of traditional Judaism; the dietary laws are exactly the same now that they were in the days of Moses." But the same article gives us also the reformed point of view which (after a half-hearted adoption of W. R. Smith's explanation) affirms that these laws have a merely temporary character. The theologian of the old school—the man of vigor and rigor who wants no quibbling or evasion—will here step in and demand a categorical answer to the question: Are these laws then of the essence of Judaism, or are they not? One or the other must be true, he will say. But in Christian theology we have learned that there are some questions which cannot be answered by a direct yes or no. It may be that Judaism, like Christianity, allows its adherents to give various answers to such questions, according to different degrees of light and knowledge. Toleration and comprehension may be of more importance than a strict adherence to tradition.

The breadth of Judaism is manifest from some phenomena of special interest. It is taken for granted by all historical students that the institution of circumcision has existed from prehistoric times among the Israelites. To this extent the Bible is right in attributing it to Abraham rather than to Moses. Its importance in the view of the biblical writer is attested by his express declaration that every male who is not circumcised shall be cut off from his people. The post-biblical view is sufficiently indicated by the Book of Jubilees, which declares that whoever is uncircumcised belongs to the sons of Belial and is the child of doom and of eternal perdition. Yet a large and influential body of Jews in our day has declared that the child of Jewish parents is a Jew though he be not circumcised, and converts to Judaism have been received into the synagogue in this country without being obliged to undergo this rite.

The difference here, it should be noted, is not a difference of opinion only; it is a difference of observance, and in Judaism observance has always held the first place. We naturally inquire why so radical a divergence has not resulted in a schism, such as came in earlier days when the Samaritans became a separate communion, or such as the Middle Ages witnessed when the Karaites were excinded from the Jewish body. The reason seems to be that the sense of nationality has endured, while the ecclesiastical organization has grown weaker. The sense of nationality needs no comment. For centuries the Jews have regarded themselves as sojourners among peoples of alien blood. This was emphasized by the attitude of the other peoples, no doubt, but it was also their own view. Early in the last century the rabbis of Poland and Hungary declared that the Jews did not wish to be admitted to the rights of citizenship in the lands of their residence. In our time, moreover, there has been a distinct revival of national aims and ambitions among the peoples of the world, resulting in pan-Germanism, pan-Slavism, pan-Islamism, perhaps to be supplemented by pan-Mongolianism. The editors of the work before us are quite correct, therefore, in saying:

The Jews have a twofold character: as representatives of a nation they have kept alive their Hebrew tradition, and as cosmopolitans they have taken part in the intellectual life of almost all cultured nations.

The art of preserving their nationality while thus partaking of the intellectual life of the other nations has been learned through a long and sorrowful course of training. It is not to be wondered at that the habit has become ingrained, and that the Jew is conscious that he is a Jew after he has put off all that is distinctively Jewish. Zionism is advocated by many who have no faith in the restoration of the Temple and its services, just because the sense of nationality remains strong after the religious conviction has disappeared. This it is which preserves the unity of Judaism in the wide divergence of doctrine and observance.

And, on the other hand, there is no strongly organized central authority which can excind the reforming party. The government of the Jewish churches is what we know as congregational. The community in any particular place has the power of enforcing discipline on its own members, and in the Middle Ages the judgment of the community had terrible power. Excommunication meant exclusion from the means of livelihood and from human companionship. But the authority of the rabbi did not extend beyond the bounds of his own congregation, and when a considerable number of men became infected by the modern spirit, it was within their

power to organize themselves into a congregation of their own. There is no central authority to pronounce such congregations schismatic or to deny them the right to call themselves Jews.

From the work before us, then, we get the picture of a progressive movement in Judaism, such as is going on in the Christian church, though without the breaking-up into a number of separate denominations which is so sad a feature of church history. One difference, however, should be noted: In Christianity the revolt has been from elaborate *creeds* imposed by church authority, while in Judaism it was from an elaborate set of *regulations* whose observance was found to be increasingly difficult in modern conditions. Some will think the difference more apparent than real; for acceptance of the creed of the church was supposed to involve obedience to the regulations of the church, while in Judaism life according to the law presupposed belief in certain truths. If we try to think of what a Jew would be who did not believe in the existence of God, we shall see that a certain amount of dogmatic faith is a necessity. Historically we may recall that Spinoza was excommunicated from the synagogue because he denied the real existence of angels and the individual immortality of the soul. It is interesting to notice also that the need of a creed as a declaration of principles is felt among American Reform Jews today.

While, then, Judaism has never imposed a creed by ecclesiastical authority, it has not been indifferent to theology. We are interested to read, under the head "Articles of Faith," of the various attempts that have been made at systematizing the beliefs of Judaism. The situation until recently was what it was in New England Congregationalism during the first two hundred years of its existence. The belief of the different congregations was of a common type, though not imposed by any central authority. In Judaism the articles which have enjoyed general acceptance are those of Maimonides, which may be briefly summarized as follows: God is One; he is the Creator; he is incorporeal; he is eternal; no other being is to be worshiped; all the words of the prophets are true; Moses is chief of the prophets; the law now in our hands is the genuine law of Moses; this law is unchangeable; God knows the hearts of men; he rewards the good and punishes the evil; the Messiah is to come; there will be a resurrection of the dead. It is almost superfluous to point out how nearly these articles agree with the fundamentals of Christian theology as usually construed.

The agreement is also strikingly brought out by the article "Theology," which is written from the point of view of a conservative Jewish thinker. This begins by saying that certain teachings are supernaturally revealed; that this revelation has taken place only at certain times in the past; that

the truths thereby made known are not to be supplemented or annulled. They are mainly contained in scripture, but in part are found in the oral law revealed to Moses. They include the affirmation that God is Creator and Ruler of the universe, that he is incorporeal, unique, omniscient, immutable (but not in such a way as to exclude the possibility of repentance and prayer on the part of men). He reveals his will in the Pentateuch, which is the Torah of Moses. This law is unchangeable, including the oral law. In reference to man the doctrine asserts his freedom and responsibility, God's providential care of him, retribution for his actions, the immortality of the soul, bliss or punishment in the other world, and the resurrection of the dead. Finally, as to the destiny of Israel it is believed that the Messiah will come and gather the scattered Jews to the land of their fathers;

there they shall form an independent kingdom and reawaken to independent national life. Then all nations shall go to Palestine to study the institutions of a state founded on love and justice. From Zion shall the peoples be taught how they in their own state institutions may realize the ideals of justice and brotherly love. . . . The mission of salvation, however, is only an indirect aim; the direct and first aim is to compensate the Jewish nation for all the sufferings it has endured through its years of exile.

It follows, of course, that the nation must not by ill-conduct, irreligious actions, and anti-national endeavors frustrate or make difficult its redemption (Vol. XII, p. 136).

The objections of Christian thinkers to this system would lie against only two of these articles—that concerning the unchangeableness of the law, and that concerning the Messiah and his work. Even the one concerning the Messiah, if interpreted of the Second Advent, would be assented to by many Christians. The reforming Jews, it is interesting to note, object most strenuously to just these articles. The first conference of Reform rabbis in this country declared that the messianic aim is not the restoration of the Jewish state, and that the sacrificial system is not to be reintroduced—that is, the law is not unchangeable. It is not to be wondered at that they heard the reproach with which we are familiar in Protestant circles, namely, that they were merely negative and destructive in their tendencies—a reproach brought also by Roman Catholics against the whole Protestant movement. The answer in all the cases is the same: Where a long tradition has accumulated there must be some tearing-down before we can build up. And again: Where there is liberty we must be prepared for diversity.

The attitude of Reform Jews, therefore, is that of progressive Christian

scholars. Life (they believe) is growth and movement; stagnation is death. What is outgrown must be sloughed off, or it will interfere with the health of the organism. But growth should take place within the bounds of the religious community in which one finds himself. Otherwise the history of each communion will be a series of a schisms and the indefinite multiplication of sects.

Reform Judaism holds that all the legalistic definitions and restrictions of religion are no longer the true expression of the religious sentiment, or of the will of God as manifested in the consciousness of the Jew (Vol. IX, p. 330).

The emphasis is here laid on the legalistic definitions, but in fact it is the creed statement of the unchangeableness of the law which is objected to. In Christianity the progressive theologian objects directly to the subtleties of the elaborate confessions of faith. The attitude is the same.

And that the attitude is not in either case negative and destructive must be evident. The test applied is "the true expression of the religious sentiment." In other words, the interest of progressive thinkers, in Judaism as in Christianity, is directed toward *religion* rather than *theology*. A leader of the Jewish reform movement sixty years ago said: The only purpose that should be kept in mind is to strengthen the religious spirit of the present generation. He was speaking, to be sure, of the public service which needed especial attention in Judasim. But his words have a wider application. The purpose of worship is edification. The public service is not something done to please God merely because he commanded it by revelation or tradition. It must appeal to the religious sentiment and must further right living. On the part of Christian theology we may make the wider application—not the public service alone, all the activities of the church on the part of her preachers and thinkers, must be such as appeal to the religious sentiment and further right living. In taking this attitude and emphasizing religion, both Jews and Christians are going back of the law and taking up anew the ideas of the Hebrew prophets. Not sacrifice, but righteousness, is what God desires, says the reformer, adopting the words of Hosea as they were adopted by Jesus eighteen hundred years earlier.

In thus adopting prophetic as distinguished from legalistic ideas the more advanced Jewish thinkers are at one with Christians. The mission of Judaism becomes the same with the mission of the church—to propagate a pure ethical monotheism. Judaism, says one author, by its idea of a divine kingdom of truth and righteousness to be built on the earth gave to mankind a hope and to history a goal for which to live and strive through the centuries (Vol. VII, p. 363). The kingdom of God thus conceived is

as far from the priest-state of the Pentateuch as it is from the millennium of Christian apocalyptic vision. Its perfection will not consist in the exalted temple on Zion to which all the nations shall come to learn what is ritually permitted and what is forbidden, but in the universality of justice, purity, and truth, in the prevalence of joy and hope and love throughout the world. So far as this ideal is adopted, we shall have in Judaism a theistic church entering into friendly rivalry with the Christian churches in educating men in righteousness and benevolence. It is not impossible that such a church may find increasing opportunity for usefulness in this composite American society, and that by the simplicity of its creed, by its moral earnestness, and by its breadth of view it may attract to itself many gentiles who do not find satisfaction in the other churches.

It seems to the Christian thinker who studies the phenomena that advanced Judaism must more definitely divest itself of some Jewish traditions. It is possible that in this we are mistaken. Even progressive Jews complain that "a just and unprejudiced estimate of Judaism is found nowhere in modern Christian writings," and the author goes on to say:

The fact of the matter is that Judaism, while representing the guardianship of universal religious truths for humanity, surrounded the Jewish people as the priestly people of the world's Only God with laws and rites of a specific national character in order to keep these truths forever intact, and at the same time to invest the guardians of them with the sanctity of the world's priesthood (Vol. VII, p. 365).

Historically we apprehend very well what is meant by this sanctity of the world's priesthood. The ideal of Ezekiel and of the Pentateuch was to keep the people from everything unclean, that the Temple might not be defiled. This ideal may be called both national and ecclesiastical. But when the Reform Jew abandons the Pentateuch as his infallible code and takes his stand with the great prophets, does he not thereby give up the aloofness and distinctness of his people? Now that by his own confession the gentiles have come to the knowledge of the God of Israel we can understand the exclusiveness which he retains only as a survival from the earlier stage of thought. But even here it is fair to point out that the conditions are similar to those in the church, where men who no longer accept the historic confessions of faith in their natural and intended sense insist on retaining them as the constitution of the church.

In one point, indeed, the complaint we have just considered may be well taken. Following Pauline tradition it is probable that we Christians exaggerate the bondage imposed by the law. The observance of six hundred and thirteen rules of daily conduct, together with the traditions intended to

hedge them about, seems to us an intolerable servitude. But in justice to sincere and earnest Jews we must admit that they do not find it so. This is sufficiently evident from the delight which the authors of many of the psalms find in the law of God. Use doth breed a habit in the man, and many lives have found obedience to the law a necessity and a custom which made it as natural as the air they breathed. The joy of submitting oneself to the will of God, whether it involve the sacrifice of the intellect to a revealed creed, the denial of the appetites in the life of the monk, the punctiliousness of the strict legalist, or the self-abnegation of the settlement worker, is something we must always take account of in religious history. Our parallel between Judaism and Christianity might be extended to these various manifestations of the religious life.

But we must give a little space to our final question: What attitude do Jewish thinkers take toward Christianity, as shown by the work before us? Considering the amount of suffering the Jews have endured from professed Christians in the past, we should not be surprised to find a harsh judgment pronounced. What we find, in fact, is a temperate estimate, and the polemic, where there is any, is in the best of temper. It is frankly recognized that Christianity is based on a belief in the God of Israel and in the Hebrew Scriptures as the Word of God. The welcome goes so far as to claim certain Christian documents for Judaism—the Epistle of James and the Didache in its earliest form. Here, as is well known, the precedent has been set by Christian scholars. The article which treats of Jesus finds in the Founder of Christianity a magnetic personality, whose teaching is in some respects more Jewish than Christian. The Lord's Prayer is declared to be only an excerpt from the Synagogal Eighteen Benedictions. The author goes on to say:

A great historic movement like Christianity cannot have arisen without a great personality to call it into existence. Jesus of Nazareth had a mission from God; and he must have had the spiritual power and fitness to be chosen for it. The very legends surrounding his life and his death furnish proofs of the greatness of his character and of the depth of the impression which it left upon the people among whom he moved (Vol. VII, p. 167).

The article on Christianity also says that Jesus was truly the redeemer of the lower classes (Vol. III, p. 50). This article, however, bases its criticism of Christianity too much on the Anselmic theory of atonement—a mistake similar to that made by Christian scholars when they identify Judaism with Talmudism. By what we must regard as a serious misapprehension the *descensus ad inferos* is said to have taken place that Christ might liberate his own soul from the pangs of eternal doom (Vol. III, p. 55).

Almost the only criticism made on Jesus is that he was harsh and distinctly unjust in his attitude toward the ruling and well-to-do classes. Whether this objection is valid we may well doubt. The attitude of Jesus was the attitude of all prophetic teachers from Amos down. The man who took the fatherhood of God seriously, and who put the command to love one's neighbor as oneself alongside of the command to love God with all the heart, must have been shocked at the neglect of the plainest duties of brotherhood on the part of the wealthy. That an aristocracy of priestly claims, like the Sadducees, or an aristocracy of learning, like the Pharisees, should show the arrogance of all aristocracies toward those beneath them, is according to analogy. What else is the meaning of the scorn visited on the *Am ha-areṣ* throughout the history of Judaism? It was this which called out the fierce denunciation of that prophet who was indeed the redeemer of the lower classes and who based his claim on the fact that he preached the good tidings to the poor.

In conclusion, we may advert to what has been mentioned by other reviewers—the attitude of the work toward the apostle Paul. The article devoted to him ("Saul of Tarsus") does, indeed, admit that his view of life, of man, and of God is a profoundly serious one.

The entire conception of religion has been deepened by him because his mental grasp was wide and comprehensive, and his thinking is bold, aggressive, searching, and at the same time systematic (Vol. XI, p. 80).

But with this appreciation we find the not uncommon conception that Paul's theology is a system of belief which endeavored to unite all men, but at the expense of reason and common-sense. What is meant is that Paul's *faith* was an intellectual assent to certain alleged truths. No other construction can be put upon the following sentence:

He substituted for the natural childlike faith of man in God as the ever-present helper in all trouble, such as the Old Testament represents it everywhere, a blind artificial faith imposed from without, and which is accounted as a meritorious act.

Elsewhere in the same article it is said that salvation according to Paul was not righteousness nor even faith—in the Jewish sense of trust in an all-loving and all-forgiving God and Father—but faith in the atoning power of Christ's death which in some mystic or judicial manner justifies the undeserving.

Doubtless the view of Paul's system here presented is the one often held by Christian theologians, but it is erroneous nevertheless. Faith according to Paul was just this trust in God as the all-loving and all-forgiving Father. The trust was in his view mediated by the death of Christ, because that event was the crowning proof of God's love, and the pledge of his forgive-

ness. In other words, faith with Paul was not the intellectual assent to a theory of atonement; it was a thoroughly religious appropriation of the love of God, based on a profound personal experience of the apostle himself. The things which we find strange in Paul are for the most part the very things which he took from the Judaism of his day. It would be interesting to show this in detail, but space forbids.

Paul was no doubt a revolutionary. He saw, or rather he experienced in his own person, the insufficiency of the Judaism of his day. The break was inevitable, just as the break of Luther with the Roman Catholic church was inevitable. We may regret the violence of the leaders in such movements, but this ought not to blind us to the fact that, humanly speaking, there could have been no advance without the boldness of their words and their acts. Even the recognition of this fact does not enable the conscientious Roman Catholic to understand Luther. Perhaps it is as difficult for the conscientious Jew to understand Paul.

Although the Christian scholar will find reason to dissent from the details of the article just discussed, it has been made clear, I trust, that he will find much in this work which will command his hearty approval. The days when the Christian thought of the Jew as a blinded and hardened rejector of the Messiah, and when the Jew looked upon the Christian as the idolatrous follower of a renegade and rebel, are long past. On both sides there is appreciation of each other's sincerity, sympathy for each other's aims, agreement as to scientific method. Great problems await solution. There seems to be no reason why we should not unite our efforts for the advance of the truth, to the end that reason and the kingdom of God may prevail.

HENRY PRESERVED SMITH

NEW YORK CITY

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### BUDDE'S HISTORY OF HEBREW LITERATURE

In the absence of ancient Hebrew MSS of any except biblical books, and in the total failure of excavation thus far to bring to light any literary monuments of Israel, the subject-matter of a book like this cannot differ much from that of the familiar Introductions to the Old Testament. If we except a fringe of apocryphal and pseudonymous writings, comparatively late in date, on the whole lightly esteemed by the Jewish scribes, and preserved to us for the most part in translations, Old Testament and ancient Hebrew literature are at present synonymous terms. Professor Budde<sup>1</sup> explains the limits of the field in the sketch of the Old Testament Canon,

<sup>1</sup> *Geschichte der althebräischen Litteratur*. Von Karl Budde. Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen von Alfred Bertholet. Leipzig: Amelang, 1906. xvi+433 pages.